

November 2006

IDAHO PUPIL TRANSPORTATION COMMUNICATOR

# BUS BUZZ



## Message for the Director



Although daylight savings time will give us a short reprieve, very soon we will be picking up and dropping off students in the dark. A great many school bus drivers feel this is the most dangerous

time of the year for transporting students and I, for one, agree. It's hard enough trying to spot every student running across the street, chasing after the bus they just missed or just horsing around at a bus stop in the daylight, let alone when it is dark outside. Include the fact that most kids' wardrobes seem to be made up of mostly dark colored clothing and you have an accident looking for a place to happen. I know you have heard it time and time again but safety is the name of our game and it's our job to help look after the kids riding our buses, even when they seem to be totally oblivious to the fact that they are not invincible. Take that extra second or two and make sure there isn't someone else you should be aware of as you approach or pull away from a stop on these dark mornings and afternoons. Idaho has the best school bus drivers in the country and their driving record proves it. Lets all do everything we can to keep it that way.

-Ray Merical, Transportation Director

## MOST WANTED

The National Transportation Safety Board met in September to review the "Most Wanted Safety List" which included the safety of school buses travel at railroad grade crossings throughout its "Look, Listen and Live" campaign. "The Most Wanted Safety List" was established in 1990 as a way for the National Transportation Safety Board to focus attention on needed safety improvements in all modes of transportation. Prompted by the fatal 2000 Conasauga, Tenn. school bus vs. train crash were five recommendations by the Safety Board. 1.) installation of stop signs at passive grade crossings that are traversed by school buses except when engineering study shows installation would create a greater hazard 2.) use of information about whether school buses routinely cross passive grade crossings as a factor in selecting crossings to upgrade with active warning devices 3.) that all newly purchased school buses be equipped with noise-reducing switches or require an acceptable alternative 4.) use of video tapes enhanced their school bus driver training to include driver performance at passive grade crossings. 5.) include questions on passive grade crossings safety in the commercial driver's license manual and examination

This article has gone on to report that twenty-one states have received acceptable rating from NTSB for satisfying three of the four recommendations. Six states have complied with as many as four of the five recommendations. A detailed break down by state is available at the NTSB Web site ([www.nts.gov/Recs/mostwanted/state\\_issues.htm](http://www.nts.gov/Recs/mostwanted/state_issues.htm)).

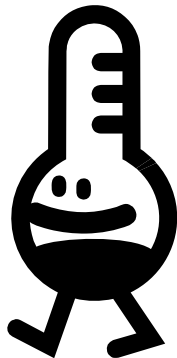
-School Transportation News, October 2006

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
★ REMINDER ★  
★ STATE ★  
★ BOARD ★  
★ MEETING ★  
★ SCHED- ★  
★ ULED FOR ★  
★ NOV. 30TH ★  
★ & DEC. 1ST ★  
★ IN POCA- ★  
★ TELLO. ★  
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## STATE TRAINING

In August 2006, the State Department of Education set a goal for the State of Idaho to have all school bus drivers in the State trained in School Bus Watch and Operation Lifesaver by July 2007. A recent workshop held in Idaho Falls on October 18, trained over 100 drivers in both of these programs, and raised the grand total of trained drivers to 662. However, with 2,800 total drivers, this is just the beginning.

For the State to achieve this goal, each region is encouraged to coordinate with neighboring districts in holding Operation Lifesaver and School Bus Watch



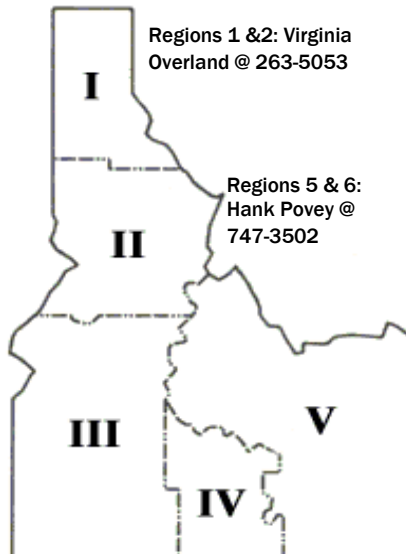
training programs.

Operation Lifesaver has made some changes to its presentation and has school bus specific information that would enhance this training program.

School Bus Watch has a second phase coming soon and it appears this will be an internet class.

The next challenge will be to have all drivers trained in phase two by July 2008. Your regional specialist would love the opportunity to help coordinate this training for your area. Please call your Regional Specialist for more information on these training topics.

-VO



Regions 1 & 2: Virginia Overland @ 263-5053

Regions 5 & 6: Hank Povey @ 747-3502

Region 3: Jerry Abbott @ 332-6854

Regions 4 & 5: Doug Scott @ 543-4566

Inside this issue:



Around the State	2
Project 25	3
Coordinator's Corner	3
Max Depreciation	4
Workshop Review	4



# National School Safety Week—Around the State

National School bus Safety Week was October 16-20, 2006. Here is what some of the districts around the state did to celebrate.

\*Kimberly school district started out the month with emergency evacuation drills for their elementary students. After morning routes, the drivers were treated to donuts, juice, coffee and breakfast burritos provided by the administration of all the schools with a short "appreciation speech" and "thank you" from the elementary principal, Kelly Messmer. The district also took all the drivers out to breakfast where the Superintendent, John Garner, thanked the drivers for their hard work and dedication to transporting the district's students safely.

\*Parma held Emergency Bus Evacuation Drills at each school location and for all grade levels, where Teachers, Teacher's Aids and Administrators boarded a school bus. Bus rules were explained as were the rules of an actual bus evacuation. Students loaded by grade level with no more than two classes per bus. All district drivers, including the shop mechanic as well as the supervisor, were responsible for completing the drills. Elementary students were given activity books and book marks after the drill was completed. Middle school students were each given a book mark. The entire drill was well accepted by everyone, especially by the teachers, as they had no idea as to what an actual evacuation of a bus entailed.

\*Minidoka school district provided an appreciation breakfast for their drivers with Alicia Bywater and Kay Buerkle doing the cooking and serving at their facility. They also conducted emergency evacuation drills for their

students the following week.

\*Twin Falls, Filer, and Castleford school districts, contractor Western States Bus Service, did safety training for their drivers in loading and unloading procedures. Site manager Paul Treglown said that most of the week was spent training drivers for all three districts and that they plan to do emergency evacuation drills for students in all three districts next week.

\*Hansen school district provided a breakfast for their drivers in appreciation of doing a good job in getting their students to and from school safely.

\*Buhl school district drivers and school administrators, after classroom review and orientation, conducted emergency evacuation drills for the entire school district's bus riders. Superintendent Rick Hill was very pleased about how smoothly the drills were executed.

\*Lapwai supplied donuts for drivers. They also mailed out letters to drivers about upcoming training. Topics will include hand signals to students and parents when crossing roadway and proper railway crossing.

\*Hagerman school district conducted emergency evacuation drills for their entire school district's bus riders.

\*Nampa provided cinnamon rolls for the drivers as they came in from their morning routes as a means of appreciation for their safe driving and overall caring of the students. Brown Bus sent the drivers a letter of appreciation, and Mr. Larsen, the Superintendent, visited and addressed all bus drivers, where he expressed his appreciation for their unrelenting efforts.

\*Blaine provided each driver with fleece driving gloves and a cake and refreshments. Some of the schools provided their drivers with boxed chocolates or a stainless steel thermos. -DS



## TO SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS:

I grew up in the city. I walked or rode my bike to school every day until I could drive to high school. It was a pretty simple plan. The only time I rode a school bus was when I went on a field trip and that did not happen very often. When it did, I really enjoyed that bus ride; big green seats, windows, and a noise level that was a kid's idea of mayhem. In short, I loved the experience. Many of our students ride the yellow bus to school as a day to day way of life. The friendly drivers are the first people they see who represent the school district. Each morning sleepy eyed students clamber on to warm buses for a journey that they will remember forever.....I can't tell you how many times I have heard "Remember when Johnny did (you name it) on the bus?" U-Haul claims to be the "Adventure in Moving". I am convinced transporting students to school is the real adventure in moving. This week was School Bus Safety Week. Students practiced emergency exit drills, safe riding procedures, etc. It is important to be prepared. However, for all of us, it is also a time to thank our drivers for the good work they do every day as they transport their precious cargo. I don't know about you, but at age 55, I am pretty tired of driving. Maybe if I sported around in a fancy car or a Vespa, it might be different. Yet, every morning I see drivers with smiles on their faces greeting students and making sure they safely arrive at school. I would be curious to know how many miles these folks have put in behind the wheel. Amazingly, they are still smiling. I also like to sleep. That too may be a factor of age. How is it that these good people can get up before dawn to drive a huge machine down the road? How about driving that beast on snow or ice with young kids on board who might be singing, laughing, or doing what kids do? I know when my dad was behind the wheel of the 1959 Ford Fairlane, we had to take the oath of silence...even when there wasn't snow. One word or giggle when he was driving a snowy road led to banishment to the basement of the house. It was serious business because we never knew what evil lurked in the basement. Only my mother could intervene at that point. So, next time you see one of our drivers, doff your cap, salute, bow, or offer them a simple thank you for a great job. They are the first step in a successful day for many of our children. We appreciate all that they do.

—Dick Cvitanich, Superintendent  
Lake Pend Oreille #084

## SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS

It's time again to extend our thanks

To the outstanding folks in our bus driver ranks!

The students are happy to load on your bus

You run a tight ship, there is not much fuss.

You support our students in so many ways

You offer words of encouragement and lots of praise.

You navigate Benewah County roads with the greatest of skill

You travel uphill and downhill with nary a spill.

Although the Mashburn Bridge was temporarily out

Leave it to you guys to find a different route!

Whether you travel from North to South or East to West

District #41 bus drivers are simply the best!

We send our best wishes and deepest appreciation

As Transportation Week is celebrated in our great Nation!

—Thanks to all of you, From all of us

Contributed by Cliff Mooney @ St. Maries

# DID YOU KNOW — PROJECT 25

In an attempt to make 2-way communications safer and more compatible with EMS, Military, Fire, and Police, Project 25, other wise known as P25 was implemented.

Recognizing the need for common standards for first responders and homeland security/emergency response professionals, representatives from the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials International (APCO), the National Association of State Telecommunications Directors (NASTD), and the National Communications System (NCS), and selected federal agencies established a steering committee for selecting voluntary common system standards for digital public safety radio communications. P25 is a change that the Department of Homeland Security's National Communications System (NCS), the Department of Defense, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), and many other local and Government agencies are making to all 2-way radio systems. This change will affect each and every one of us. If you use a 2-way radio you will be affected.

The Oklahoma City bombing and September 11, 2001 are just two of the reasons why P25 was implemented. In the next few years we will all need to change over to the P25 technology. In order to guarantee that every one using 2-way radios converts over to a P25 system, the FCC will not renew any FCC licenses when they come due for renewal.

P25 systems use what is called the Common Air Interface (CAI). This standard specifies the type and content of signals transmitted by compliant radios. One radio using CAI should be able to communicate with any other CAI radio, regardless of manufacturer.

At present, most public safety channels are 25 kHz wide. Current P25 radios are designed to use 12.5 kHz wide channels, allowing two conversations to take place where only one used to fit. Eventually, P25 radios will use 6.25 kHz channels, allowing four times as many conversations compared to analog. P25 radios must also be able to operate the old way, in analog mode on 25 kHz channels. This is called *backward compatibility*, and allows agencies to gradually transition to digital while continuing to use older equipment.

P25 transmissions may be protected by encryption. The standards specify the use of the U.S. Data Encryption Standard (DES) algorithm, but other algorithms may be used. There is an addi-

tional specification for over-the-air re-keying (OTAR) to deliver new encryption keys to radios.

P25 channels that carry voice or data, called *traffic channels*, operate at 9600 bits per second (bps). These channels are protected by a substantial amount of forward error correction, which helps receivers to compensate for poor radio frequency conditions and improves useable range.

P25 also supports data transmission, either piggybacked with voice (so-called *slow data*),

## COORDINATOR'S CORNER

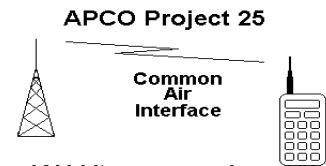
School transportation safety, doesn't that have a great ring? Many people thought so two years ago when it was being discussed by the Idaho State Legislature.

You may have forgotten and are wondering what I am talking about. I am talking about our, and yes I do call it ours because it belongs to everyone in student transportation, license plate. The student transportation safety license plates represent the safety of every child in Idaho that rides a school bus. No matter who you are or what you do representing the safety of our kids should be at the top of your list of important things to do. It has been two years since the plates went on sale but we need to let people know that they are still available and what they represent. You can spread the word by advertising in your school, organization papers and newsletters, or by putting one on your personal car, truck or district's school buses.

The thing we have to remember, and let others know, is that all proceeds from the sale of the license plates go into a fund that is set up to promote school transportation safety. A new license plate costs \$35.00 of which \$25.00 goes into the school transportation safety fund. To renew is \$25.00 and \$15 of that goes into the fund. If successful, the funds will be used for things like purchasing and maintaining "Buster the Buses" and other student safety programs including, safe routes to schools. It is everyone's responsibility to help educate kids in safe means to get to and from school whether it be by bus, bike or foot. The "Busters" we have are getting tired. When they are gone there is no funding to replace them. It would be a shame to lose such a great training tool.

At this time only 115 pupil transportation license plates have been sold in the State of Idaho. So, the next time you renew the license plates on your buses or personal vehicles think of school transportation safety. Consider helping the children in Idaho by purchasing student transportation specialized license plates. **YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.**

—Brad Jensen, Transportation Coordinator



- 9600 bits per second
- IMBE vocoder
- QPSK-C modulation

or in several other modes up to the full traffic channel rate of 9600 bps.

There will be a couple of phases to the P25 conversion, and the first phase of equipment will be compatible with the second phase.

### Phase 1

Phase 1 radio systems operate in 12.5 KHz, analog, digital or mixed mode. Phase 1 radios use Continuous 4 level FM (C4FM) non-linear modulation for digital transmissions. Phase 1 P25-compliant systems are backward compatible and interoperable with legacy systems, across system boundaries, and regardless of system infrastructure. In addition, P25 suit of standards provide an open interface to the radio frequency (RF) subsystem to facilitate interlinking of different vendors' systems.

### Phase 2

Phase 2 is currently under development with the goal of defining either FDMA and/or TDMA standards to achieve one voice channel or a minimum 4800 bps data channel per 6.25 kHz bandwidth efficiency. P25 Phase 2 implementation involves time and frequency modulation schemes (e.g., TDMA and FDMA), with the goal of improved spectrum utilization. Also being stressed are such features as interoperability with legacy equipment, interfacing between repeaters and other subsystems, roaming capacity and spectral efficiency/channel reuse.

In order to get prepared for the changes to come we will be sending out a 2-way radio inventory form for district's and contractors to complete. The information we collect will be used to determine what radios are P25 compliant, and what radios are not P25 compliant. The information collected will help in determining what course of action the state department will need to take when migrating to the P25 system, as well as helping to streamline the process. It is very important to keep in mind that when preparing to purchase a new radio for your fleet; that you make sure it is P25 compatible. There are radio dealers out there that are selling 2-way radios that are not P25 compatible. If you purchase a 2-way radio that is not P25 compatible, you will need to replace the radio in a very short time in order to convert over to the P25 system.







Idaho Department of Education  
Student Transportation  
650 W. State Street  
PO Box 83720  
Boise, ID 83720-0027

Phone: (208) 332-6851  
Fax: (208) 334-3484  
E-mail: [adsalazar@sde.idaho.gov](mailto:adsalazar@sde.idaho.gov)

## COMING

SDE's 2007 Annual Train-the-Trainer and Tech Workshops will be held the week of July 16th. Some of the topics being considered are ABS brake systems, Hydraulic and Air brake systems, Electronics, Engine changes and diagnostics. If there is a subject that you would like to see provided for training contact SDE. We look forward to seeing everyone there.

-DS

## Transportation Reimbursement Workshops

SDE School Transportation held six regional workshops in September to discuss transportation reimbursement and how to complete the claim form. Approximately 145 people attended, representing 85 school districts. There was a lot of good information and discussion at the workshops. If you were unable to attend, a copy of the PowerPoint presentation is available at <http://www.sde.idaho.gov/finance/transport/>.

A few highlighted topics that were discussed are:

- \* Funding Cap Model
- \* Office of Performance Evaluations (OPE) Recommendations
- \* Proposed changes to the Reimbursement/Non-Reimbursement Matrix, such as CPR/First Aid training, conferences, and changes to how non-conforming vehicles (shuttle cars or shop truck) are reimbursed.
- \* Using the Field Trip Mileage Tracking Determination chart for reimbursement eligibility.
- \* Vehicle insurance deductibles and bus garage property insurance.

- \* Tracking mileage and costs related to district-owned over-the-road coach buses or vans.
  - \* Reimbursements received and adjustments for non-student and non-public riders.
  - \* Depreciation: The maximum number of spare/activity/field trip buses on depreciation is .001 of ADA (SISBO page 78). Depreciation on used buses, forfeiture for selling bus early, delivery mileage, and the School Bus Replacement Fund (IC 33-1512).
  - \* Non-Reimbursable Bus Options (SISBO): white roof, tinted windows, fire block seating material, air conditioning (unless IEP driven), and diesel-fired auxiliary heater (unless pre-approval).
  - \* Ridership Counts: Only properly enrolled public school students should be counted. Ineligible, non-public, and non-student riders should not be included.
- If you have any questions pertaining to information discussed at the workshops, please contact Lanette Daw, Finance Specialist, at (208) 332-6851 or [Ldaw@sde.idaho.gov](mailto:Ldaw@sde.idaho.gov).

-LD

## MAXIMUM DEPRECIATION FOR 2006-2007 BUS PURCHASES

### 12-Year Schedule: All Conventional - GAS

Capacity:	73 & Up	59-72	47-58	35-46	20-34	11-19
Maximum Depreciation:	Average Price Unestablished	Average Price Unestablished	Average Price Unestablished	Average Price Unestablished	\$46,983	\$42,138

### 12-Year Schedule: All Conventional - DIESEL

Capacity:	73 & Up	59-72	47-58	35-46	20-34	11-19
Maximum Depreciation:	\$69,276	\$70,018	\$65,516	\$65,335	\$48,217	Average Price Unestab-

### 12-Year Schedule: Transit FE - DIESEL

Capacity:	85 & Up	73-84	59-72	47-58	35-46	20-34	11-19
Maximum Depreciation:	\$83,686	\$79,470	\$80,654	Average Price Unestablished	Average Price Unestablished	Average Price Unestablished	Average Price Unestablished

### 12-Year Schedule: Transit RE - DIESEL

Capacity:	73 & Up	59-72	47-58	35-46	20-34	11-19
Maximum Depreciation:	\$90,498	Average Price Unestablished	Average Price Unestablished	Average Price Unestablished	Average Price Unestablished	Average Price Unestablished